CURRENT LITERATURE.

Little Flower-People. By Gertrude Elizabeth Hale. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1887. 12°. pp. 85. Illustrated.

Here is a book to be commended, both for what it attempts to do and for what it really does. The author wishes to interest children in some of the elementary facts of scientific botany. To do this she personifies the chief organs of the plant and relates how these several members of a household assist one another and the results they bring about. Thus each flower is a mistress attended by leaf, stem and root servants, and by the activity of the servants the life and perpetuation of the plant is assured.

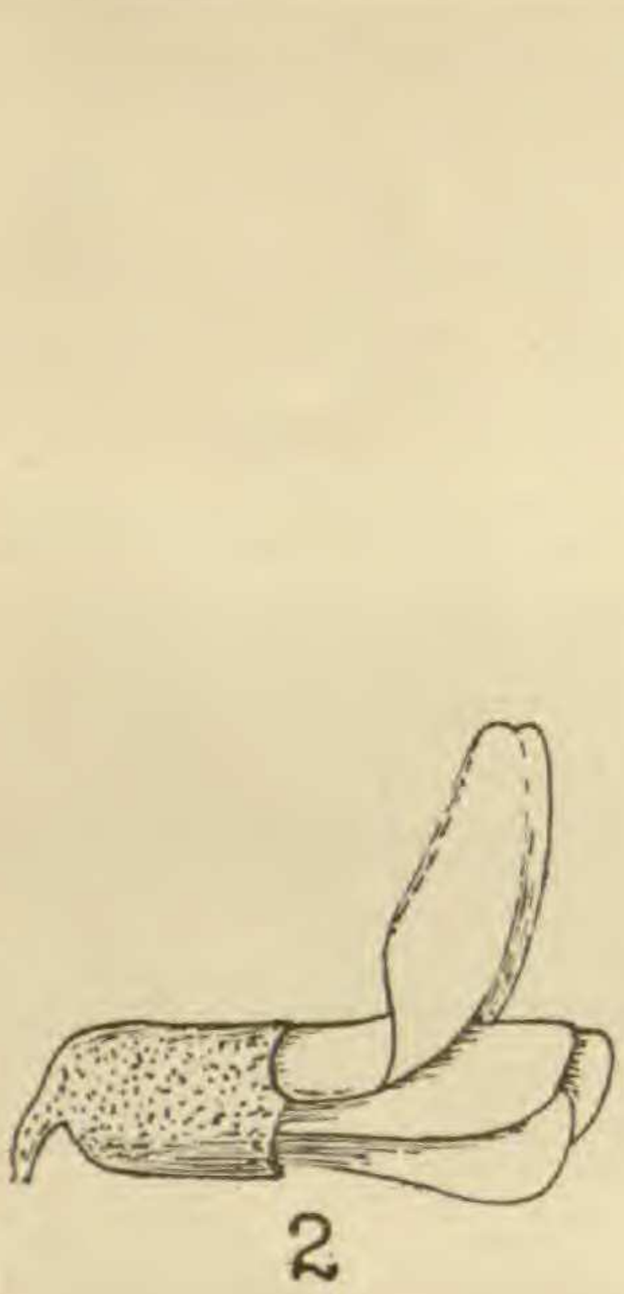
The literary part is well done, the botanical part irreproachable (to be said of but few children's books), and the child that can read *St. Nicholas* or *Wide Awake* with profit will find interest and instruction in this pretty volume. The amount of serviceable knowledge, overspread with a thin veil of fancy, is really astonishing, and herein lies the danger; for if the child is left entirely to himself it may happen that now and then he will find thought and language beyond his grasp.

A Primer of Botany. By Mrs. A. A. Knight. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1887. Sm. 12°. pp. 115. Illustrated.

Sachs' Text-book and Bessey's Botany boiled down for babes! That is the way it strikes one upon first looking into this work; and every prejudice against so preposterous an idea is at once aroused. But our fervor is somewhat abated when we find in the preface that the author has considered the matter from this very point of view—"as if one should read Spenser in the nursery," she says. An unbiased examination of the work, we feel sure, will convince most teachers that Mrs. Knight has really performed an excellent service.

In the first place the book is not to be put into the hands of the pupil, but is onlyto be used by the teacher as an outline of the subject and of the method of its presentation. Moreover, the teacher must already know botany from previous study—not the botany of the usual high school course, but that of the laboratory—the botany in which the one-sixth objective glass is no greater hindrance than the common hand magnifier, and pond scum, mildews, mushrooms and lichens are as well understood objects as trees and flowers. Presupposing this much knowledge on the part of the teacher, the possession of a good compound microscope and a moderate allotment of time, the successful teaching of pupils, who find "protoplasm" a big word to spell and remember, will depend largely upon the tact of the teacher.

Nearly fifty pages of the book are devoted to the microscopic structure of plants, as much more to physiology, and the remaining twenty pages to the plant body, the distribution of plants, and the use and care of the microscope, the last subject being treated by Mr. G. N. Cross.



VASEY on FASCIATION.

It would be downright folly to teach these subjects to children, if every step is not fortified by clear observations and experiments, for which the work provides. The book is so constructed that rote teaching is, indeed, well nigh out of the question. The limited number of well qualified teachers will restrict its use more than the inherent difficulty of the subject.

A number of errors and oversights seems to be the rule in works of this class, to which the present one is no exception. On p. 16 the pericarp of the peach and apple is spoken of as the seed coat. There ap pears to be a misconception of the limits of the epidermal system, especially conspicuous on p. 24, and also of the significance of the term, "growing point," which is made frequent use of. On p. 50 water is not recognized as a part of the food of the plant, although the way the plant makes use of it as a food is described on p. 53.

Elements of Botany; including organography, vegetable histology, vegetable physiology and vegetable taxonomy, and a glossary of botanical terms. By Edson S. Bastin, A. M., F. R. M. S., professor of botany, materia medica and microscopy in the Chicago College of Pharmacy. 8°., pp. xv, 282, figs. 459. Chicago: G. P. Engelhard & Co. 1887.

Botanical text-books are coming thick and fast. It is one of the signs of the times which indicates that botany is taking its proper place among the sciences which ought to be taught. This book is a welcome addition to the list. It does not pretend to exhaust the subject; it does state fairly and clearly the *elements* of botany. The order of presentation is good, and well adapted to the needs of a large class of students. Part I (106 pp.) treats of the various organs of the higher plants, and covers essentially the same ground as Gray's Lessons. Part II (62 pp.) gives a brief account of the cells, tissues, tissue systems of plants and their arrangement in the several organs. Part III (27 pp.) contains a condensed treatment of the functions of plants. Part IV (55 pp.) explains the classification of plants on the same system and in very much the same style as Bessey in his well-known text-book. To each chapter in parts I and II is appended a series of directions for practical study which are specially commendable. Why are they not also found in part III? This physiological portion might have been doubled in extent with great profit to students, as some important topics are omitted, or too briefly treated to be comprehensible.

The book, as a whole, is comparatively free from errors, which is a great point in its favor. It is attractively written, and everywhere exhibits a strong pedagogic spirit. Some unfortunate typographical errors have been overlooked which should be corrected in another edition. The chief fault we have to mention is the illustration. The figures, the author states, were drawn by his own hand to insure accuracy. We have no criticism upon their accuracy (with very few exceptions), but the *quality* of the majority is not at all in keeping with the beautiful text.